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## NOTES AND NEWS.

DR. J. T. RORER, of the Central High School, Philadelphia, has been asked to organize and direct the mathematical courses of the new William Penn High School for Girls, of that city, which will comprise both academic and vocational departments. Dr. Rorer has accepted the election and will enter upon his new duties in September.

A MEETING OF THE NEW YORK SECTION was held at the High School of Commerce, Friday, April 16, 1909, at 8:00 p. m., at which time the following program was carried out:

1. Report of Secretary.
2. Final Report of Committee on Marking Mathematical Papers, by Dr. A. Latham Baker, Manual Training High School, Chairman.
3. General Topic for the Evening: The Teaching of Geometry. (a) "The Use and Abuse of Text-books, Applied Particularly to Geometry," by Dr. William J. Milne, President State Normal College, Albany, N. Y.; (b) "Teaching Geometry with a Syllabus Only," by Mr. Eugene R. Smith, Head of Department of Mathematics, Polytechnic Preparatory School, Brooklyn; (c) discussion to be led by the following: Miss Grace M. Peters, Normal College, New York City, and Mr. William R. Lasher, Erasmus Hall High School, Brooklyn; (d) General Discussion. The old officers were reelected and Mr. Philip R. Dean, of Curtis High School, was elected a member of the executive committee.

IN THE CASE OF GEOMETRY, there has been but one period in all its history—the period of *logical demonstration*. For two thousand years the demonstrations have been polished and refined, the abstract reasoning has been analyzed and synthesized, till geometry has come to be regarded as the one perfect subject in the high school curriculum, so purified and crystallized, indeed, that it will almost teach itself.

It is more venerable than algebra, and reverence for age would well nigh deter us from raising any question as to its legitimate standing in its present form in the school program. But our complaisance has been disturbed by some developments in the new psychology and the rise of the sciences to a position

of importance in the curriculum. We had come to believe, as an inheritance of the ages, that nothing whatever could take the place of geometry for mental discipline; even now we are not prepared to capitulate this stronghold entirely, and yet we are compelled to admit that work in some of the sciences has come to occupy a very strong position in this regard, and that the chances for the development of mental power outside of geometry are much greater to-day than they were before the dawn of the present age of science.

We had also fondly cherished the traditional belief that geometry is a tonic for all mental shortcomings (and we do not propose to retreat completely from this position), but we do not now dare to place as much confidence as heretofore in the theory that wits sharpened on geometry will therefore present a keen edge in all other phases of mental activity. We have seen so many good geometricians who seemed to possess small logical sense in other affairs and so many good logicians who have small knowledge and little facility in geometry, that we can no longer believe in the inevitable transference of power gained in the study of geometry to effective use in other lines. The fact is that geometry must hold its place in the curriculum on the same basis as all other subjects. The right of eminent domain based upon the sole dictum of *mental discipline* is no longer effective. For centuries Latin held its own chiefly on this ground, but to-day it would be on the way "down and out" if its supporters had not already given timely recognition to the claims of the new education and effected a radical reorganization in the teaching of the subject. As it is, we see this ancient language even gaining ground in the present secondary curriculum because the form of its study has been, and is still being, readjusted so as to give it lively contact with every language phase of modern life. It is not simply that Latin has been found worthy to meet certain important needs of a utilitarian age, but in readjusting itself to these needs it has exemplified the new education and brought to light a more profound pedagogy, in that the *old* claim of mental discipline is quite as fully met by the *new* methods of presentation and application.—Extract from paper by Professor H. E. Slaught.